

Malibu/Lost Hills Sheriff's Station

LEROY D. BACA, Sheriff

Community Crime Prevention Tips Crime Warnings and Prevention Tips

Thefts from Vehicles: Unattended vehicles are being targeted again. No one ever thinks that their vehicle will be broken into, but recently, this is happening with greater frequency. That vehicle driving around the parking lot at retail centers, workout facilities and down your streets may not be a patron or residents. Thefts from vehicles at retail centers, workout facilities and residential streets continue to be a problem.

Regardless of location, anywhere vehicles are left unattended are popular places for crooks to do their illegal shopping. Vehicles left unattended for long periods of time give the crooks ample time and plenty of vehicle selection on which car to break into and rummage through. Lately, the crooks have most often chosen our local areas as a place to do their capering. When you venture out, be diligent and do not keep anything in your vehicle that you do not want the crooks to steal. Keep in mind: laptops, wallets, purses, backpacks, I-phones, navigation systems, etc., are items the crooks will break into your vehicles to take. Remember the saying, "out of sight, out of mind." Don't invite the crooks to victimize you, lock your items in the trunk before you get to your destination and only take what you need, for example: take only your credit card that you plan to use, your drivers license, vehicle registration and proof of insurance.

Thefts from Homes: Recently we have experienced a few residential burglaries in the area so here are a few tips worth sharing. Residents' continue to leave their garage doors open, what does that tell the crook? "Take what you want." Most of the homes in our area also have doors that access the house for the garage. If your garage door is open you have just allowed access to your house. Other access points to be aware of, are animal doors, unlocked sliding glass doors, unlocked windows, etc. Remember, always keep the garage door closed and your doors and windows locked. This is not only for your personal safety, but also to keep your property secure. If you have a home alarm system that allows you to arm it while having doors and window open, then make sure you do so.

Crimes: Crimes in our area are of two types, violent and nonviolent. In our area you should feel very safe because violent crime, although they do occur, is not the norm for this area. Nonviolent crimes on the other hand, is what we experience more often. These nonviolent crimes predominately consist of thefts. Recently this type of crime is taking place much too often. Residential burglaries often occur in broad daylight where the crooks enter the home utilizing the front door or a front window. These thieves obviously don't fear anyone will report them. We need to watch out for each other to protect us all from the bad guys. Remember that the crooks count on people not paying attention and not wanting to get involved.

A Tradition of Service

Be a good neighbor and call the sheriff's station to report anything out of the ordinary or suspicious right away.

- * **Telephone Scams:** Recently a resident called me and related a story about a friend being scammed on the phone by a solicitor claiming to be with a law enforcement agency. This scammer was asking for donations and, unfortunately, the victim was tricked into giving some pertinent financial information. Make no mistake: no law enforcement agency will ever solicit donations or contributions or ask for bank and credit card numbers over the telephone. If you suspect anyone of trying to deceive you, ask questions from them like a phone number, their name, a supervisor's name, the address of their agency, a website address, etc. You will be surprised how fast the caller/scammer hangs up on you. Remember: "if sounds too good to be true, it most likely isn't true."
- * **Strangers at your front door:** Caution about strangers at your front door and two recent events reinforce this warning. In Oxnard, a homeowner shot an intruder after the would-be-thief rang the doorbell, got no response and attempted to break-into the rear of the residence. The crook paid for his criminal behavior. In Camarillo, the would-be-thief employed the same tactic as in the above incident and again someone was inside the home but this resident was not armed. The thief was scared off by the resident. However, the resident first called a family member instead of the police. I have heard of numerous residents doing the same thing when put in a similar situation. I cannot stress this point enough, if a crime is happening or just occurred, please call 911 first so we have a better chance of assisting you and apprehending the bad guys.
- * **Women beware:** A young lady was on her way to the local gym in the early morning hours. A male suspect, in a different vehicle, tricked her into believing that she had a flat tire. The victim stopped in the parking lot and the suspect got into the victim's vehicle and inappropriately touched the victim. Although this happened in another city, this crime can easily happen here to anyone. Be aware of your surroundings, be smart and savvy at all times. In this situation, you feel the need to pull over to check on the safety of your vehicle, pull over in a well lit and well-populated area with potential witnesses in sight.

Fortunately you live in an extremely low crime area. With this in mind, we sometimes become complacent when it comes to crime prevention. Hopefully these tips will assist you and help us in our fight against crime.

If you have any questions, please contact Deputy Shawn Brownell at (818) 878-5506.